

THE TOP 20 TEACHER BLOGS

Need some new lesson-plan ideas or need a break from classroom antics? Maybe you just want to connect with other teachers who "get it." Below are 20 blogs that have taught us a few things, made us laugh, made us cry, and reminded us that we are not alone in this sometimes stress-inducing, always awe-inspiring profession. Once you're done checking them out, go online to scholastic.com/instructor to vote for your favorite!

By Margie Gelbwasser



1. Best for Hands-on Activities

MRS. CASSIDY'S CLASSROOM BLOG

classblogmeister.com/blog.php?blogger_id=1337

THE LOWDOWN: Canadian first-grade teacher Kathy Cassidy invites readers into the classroom to interact with students and her dynamic lessons.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Besides sharing fun ideas like making fairy-tale characters out of clay, Cassidy lets us witness her students' learning firsthand by posting lots of videos and photographs. And another bonus: We get to learn from Cassidy's many guest speakers, too!

WHY SHE LOVES BLOGGING: "My favorite thing about blogging," says Cassidy, "is that the students literally have a worldwide audience. They see themselves as writers because people can and do read and comment on their work."

3. Best Student Teacher Blog

DOCERE EST DISCERE

docereestdiscere.wordpress.com

THE LOWDOWN: Galen "Mr. B." Broadus discusses his journey toward becoming a teacher.

WHY WE LOVE IT: From tips for up-and-coming student teachers to his own reflections on his process, Mr. B. reminds us

how far we have come. Perfect for those days when we're feeling just a bit jaded.

WHY HE LOVES BLOGGING: Broadus enjoys the feedback. "Knowing that there are other teachers (or teacher candidates) out there who are working the front lines and having the same concerns that I have had is comforting, and we work through them together," he says.

2. Best News From the Trenches

TEACHFOR.US, teachfor.us

THE LOWDOWN: Teach for America teachers share the ins and outs of the sometimes controversial program.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Whether you want TFA dirt (like how tough the boot-camp training really is) or warm fuzzies (like one blogger's quest to get her student to love books by reading with her nightly over the phone), you'll find the goods in this collection of blogs from TFA corps members working all over the country.

Best Teacher Blogs



4. Best for Art Teachers (or Other Happy Finger-Painters!)

THE TEACHING PALETTE, theteachingpalette.com/blog

THE LOWDOWN: Teachers Hillary Andrik and Theresa McGee cover useful resources (like the best iPhone apps for art teachers), classroom-management techniques, and art-worthy news.

WHY WE LOVE IT: With arts programs always under threat, it's nice to feel like there's an online home for people who value the importance of watercolor and oil paints.

WHY THEY LOVE BLOGGING: Both McGee and Andrik enjoy the opportunity to connect with teachers nationally and internationally. Says McGee, "Art education has a unique set of challenges, and blogging has created an online forum to share ideas." Adds Andrik, "Our readers often give us new insight on a topic or provide a fresh perspective based on their unique experience."

5. Best for Tech Wannabes

CREATING LIFELONG LEARNERS
needleworkpictures.com

THE LOWDOWN: Tech wiz Mathew Needleman provides quick tips on integrating tech into the classroom.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Needleman skips the jargon and explains how to incorporate iPhones in the classroom, clarifies podcast copyright laws, and discusses making digital movies, putting even the technologically challenged at ease.

6. Best Forward-Thinking Tech Blog

INTEGRATING TECH
thespian70.blogspot.com

THE LOWDOWN: Pennsylvania teacher Scott Snyder is always ahead of the technological curve.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Who would have thought texting, tweeting, and chat rooms made for good lessons? Snyder uses all of these, plus Skype and Chatzy, to conduct discussions in the classroom.

7. Best Special-Ed Blog

DIGITAL ANTHOLOGY
digitalanthology.blogspot.com

THE LOWDOWN: Award-winning special-education teacher Maria Angala posts daily lessons and classroom videos.

WHY WE LOVE IT: There's no hard-core pedagogy here—other than that determination can make all successful—but we get to see the kids' creativity at work. And if you want something more theory-based, Angala keeps another blog at teachersol.blogspot.com.

WHY SHE LOVES BLOGGING: Says Angala, "Our social workers read the blog to understand my students' inner feelings."

8. Best for Super Science Ideas

SCIENCE FIX
sciencefix.com

THE LOWDOWN: Middle school science teacher Darren Fix entertains with science lessons and experiments.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Watch his Mr. Wizard-style experiments—like using a jellyfish to learn genetic engineering.

WHY HE LOVES BLOGGING: Says Fix, "Posting stimulates my creativity and leads to new ideas. It's a positive experience in a profession that unfortunately dwells on the negative too much."

9. Best Superintendent Straight Talk

PRINCIPALS PAGE
principalspage.com/theblog

THE LOWDOWN: Illinois superintendent Michael Smith chronicles his days.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Smith's blog discusses everything from Ferris Bueller to teaching conferences to a surefire way for President Obama to fix education.

WHY HE LOVES BLOGGING: Says Smith, "It allows a small-town superintendent to be involved in national or worldwide discussions on education issues."

10. Best for Kid Book Reviews

A YEAR OF READING
readingyear.blogspot.com

THE LOWDOWN: Teachers Franki Sibberson and Mary Lee Hahn review

new children's books.

WHY WE LOVE IT: The reviews are always teacher-focused, pinpointing possible readers as well as how a book might be used in the classroom.

WHY THEY LOVE BLOGGING: Says Sibberson, "The writing helps us stay current on books and with teaching."

11. Best Student-Written Blog

YOUTH VOICES
youthvoices.net

THE LOWDOWN: Students and their teachers participate in a "colossal ongoing discussion about everything" via podcasts, videos, and blogs.

WHY WE LOVE IT: This blog turns the typical student-teacher relationship on its head with both parties acting as equals and learning from each other.

12. Best Tell-It-Like-It-Is Blog

IT'S NOT ALL FLOWERS AND SAUSAGES
itsnotallflowersandsausages.blogspot.com

THE LOWDOWN: A second-grade teacher with the pseudonym Mrs. Mimi dishes about the crazy side of teaching.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Fantasies of throwing down with that colleague who rummages through your desk? Horror field-trip moments that have carved a permanent groove in your mind? Faculty-room shenanigans that rule your day? Thanks to Mrs. Mimi, we never have to feel alone.

WHY SHE LOVES BLOGGING: Says Mrs. Mimi, "It's comforting to know that I am not alone in my frustrations."

13. Best Laugh-Out-Loud Blog

REGURGITATED ALPHA BITS
regurgitatedalphabits.blogspot.com

THE LOWDOWN: Anonymous elementary school teacher blogs about the students she loves and the job she hates.

WHY WE LOVE IT: This blog gives you totally true antics of the elementary school kind and tips you can really use: Preview "educational" videos before showing and be alert for fourth-grade make-out sessions! Perfect with a good cup of coffee, when you need to block out irritating colleagues, and when you could use a good laugh to start your day.

14. Best for Media Specialists

TECHNO TUESDAY

blog.cathynelson.com

THE LOWDOWN: Media specialist Cathy Nelson provides tips on incorporating library technology into lessons.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Nelson shares creative research ideas as well as humorous daily tidbits.

WHY SHE LOVES BLOGGING: Says Nelson, "It enhances my ability to be reflective, to see how I have learned from others."

15. Best for Problem Solving

CLASSROOM SOLUTIONS

blogs.scholastic.com/classroom_solutions

THE LOWDOWN: Hear straight from Scholastic's team of teacher advisors on topics ranging from reader's workshop to discipline and organization.

WHY WE LOVE IT: All of the photos and videos! Almost every post features a photo showing exactly how the teacher advisor implemented an idea in his or her classroom. You can also subscribe to the posts for just your grade level.

16. Best Substitute Secrets

JUST A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

kawaiiemark.blogspot.com

THE LOWDOWN: "Mr. Homework" tells harrowing tales of the substitute kind.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Let's be honest.

Sometimes we'd rather come in sick than call in a sub. Mr. Homework, however, is one of the good guys. His outlook on the sub life (e.g., "Sometimes it's not about actually teaching anything") makes us wish he was in our district.

17. Most Entertaining Math Blog

HOODA MATH BLOG

hoodamathblog.com

THE LOWDOWN: Math teacher Michael Edlavitch uses games to teach math.

WHY WE LOVE IT: The word *games* may conjure images of worksheets with cutesy pics and fill-ins, but Edlavitch goes way beyond that. His arcade games with Flash—complete with worksheets teachers can print out—are reminiscent of old favorites like Pac-Man. Kids will play video games anyway, why not sneak in some learning potential?

18. Best Classroom Use of Blogs

LEARNING IS MESSY

learningismessy.com/blog

THE LOWDOWN: Brian Crosby discusses how he uses blogging and other technology in the classroom.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Crosby's creativity can't help but draw us in. He has used Skype to broadcast a class visit from Christa McAuliffe's mother and to communicate with a student who is on home instruction due to leukemia.

WHY HE LOVES BLOGGING: Says Crosby, "It is the strongest resource I have experienced in 28 years of teaching."

19. Best View of the Inner City

THE JOSE VILSON

thejosevilson.com/blog

THE LOWDOWN: Artist, poet, and math educator Jose Vilson gives the inner city a human face by blogging about sometimes touchy topics.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Vilson does not shy away from tackling the controversial, such as his entry about the shortage of black Latino male teachers like himself. He's passionate about changing education and exposing inner-city reality, and his passion is contagious.

20. Best Blog From Outside the Classroom

TALES FROM THE SCHOOL BUS

talesofaschoolbusdriver.blogspot.com

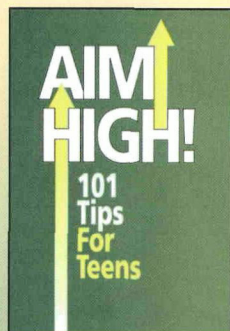
THE LOWDOWN: A school bus driver fills us in on the insanity that goes on before students enter the classroom every morning and after they leave.

WHY WE LOVE IT: We all have to multitask, but try keeping order and driving at the same time! This blog gives us the dirt—from failing brakes to bus "heathens" like WhinyGirl. This is a side of school we often overlook! □

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